

RECOGNITION OF CAPTAIN TRAVIS FORD

HON. TOM OSBORNE

OF NEBRASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 29, 2003

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the outstanding accomplishments of Captain Travis Ford, formerly of Ogallala, Nebraska. Captain Ford was one of the thousands of men and women who were called to serve in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Captain Travis Ford was born in Saint Paul, Nebraska, in 1973. At the age of two, Captain Ford's family was told that he had developed a heart murmur and only had one year to live. Captain Ford did not let that stop him. In 1991, as an Ogallala High School graduate, he received the Dutch Cup, and was named the male athlete of the year. He was all-conference in football and named conference champion in wrestling.

After high school graduation, Captain Ford enlisted in the United States Marine Corps as an Engineer Equipment Operator. But he decided he had more to offer his country. Captain Ford pursued and achieved a Bachelors Degree in Accounting and completed officer training at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. Captain Ford also participated in extracurricular activities at the University by becoming a member of the yell squad. It was during a Nebraska football game that Captain Ford proposed to his wife, Deon, with the help of the other cheerleaders.

Captain Ford, like many Nebraskans, strived to accomplish more and set higher goals, which took him around the country. In May of 1997, Captain Ford was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps. He attended Field Artillery Officer's Basic Course at Fort Sill, Oklahoma and was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 11th Marines. Captain Ford achieved his ultimate goal when he was accepted in the Fleet Accession Program in Pensacola, Florida, to train as a helicopter pilot. Captain Ford excelled and graduated second in his class, and earned his Wings of Gold. Captain Ford eventually made his way to Camp Pendleton, California, where he trained to fly the AH-1 Super Cobra helicopter.

Captain Ford's passion to fly Super Cobra helicopters took him to Iraq, where he honorably served his country. Sadly, Captain Ford did not see the outcome of his hard work and dedication because Captain Travis Ford was killed in the line of duty on April 4, 2003, before the end of hostilities.

Captain Ford leaves behind his supportive and loving wife, Deon, and two-year-old daughter, Ashley; his mother, Josie Ford; brothers Alex, Trevor, Mike, Todd and Matt; as well as his brothers' families.

I want to thank Captain Ford's family for their sacrifice to our country. They are in our thoughts and prayers.

HONORING PETER R. BENEVENTO

HON. JAMES P. McGOVERN

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 29, 2003

Mr. McGOVERN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in recognition of Assistant Special Agent In

Charge Peter R. Benevento on his retirement after many years with the Internal Revenue Service.

In October of 1975, Mr. Benevento began his career with the Internal Revenue Service, later transferring to the Criminal Investigation division in 1977. Serving as a CI Special Agent, he worked in Manhattan from 1977 to 1985, and then out of Albany from 1986 to 1993. In July of 1993, Mr. Benevento became a manager in Stoneham, Massachusetts.

As a manager of Group 7 in Boston, Mr. Benevento worked on numerous narcotics cases, coordinating closely with other agencies, and displaying unyielding dedication. For two years he served as the coordinator of the IRS Organized Crime and Drug Enforcement Taskforce. Over the years Mr. Benevento has been involved in a variety of important cases, ranging from legal income tax cases to those focusing on public corruption. In January of 2002, Mr. Benevento became Assistant Special Agent in Charge of the Boston Field Office, which has jurisdiction over New England. This is the position from which he will now retire from service in the IRS.

Through his dedication, hard work, and record of accomplishment, Mr. Benevento has earned the admiration and respect of his co-workers. It is a great pleasure to offer my sincere congratulations and appreciation for all of his accomplishments.

Mr. Speaker, I am certain that the entire House of Representatives joins me in extending best wishes to Mr. Benevento and his wife Marion for a happy and healthy retirement.

JAMES A. WILDING RETIRES AS PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIRPORTS AUTHORITY

HON. FRANK R. WOLF

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, April 29, 2003

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize James A. Wilding on the occasion of his retirement as president and chief executive officer of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority (MWAA). Jim has been responsible for the management of two of our most important airports in the country—Washington Dulles International Airport and Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport.

The very first bill I introduced when I came to Congress sought to move control of Dulles Airport from the Federal Aviation Administration to the Commonwealth of Virginia. In 1987, that idea took a new and expanded form. After several years of work with the administration, Transportation Secretary Elizabeth Dole and members of Congress on both sides of the aisle and both sides of the Capitol, President Reagan signed into law legislation getting the Federal Government out of the airport business. The new law established the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority and placed both Dulles and the now-named Reagan National airports under local control.

As a career Federal employee at the Federal Aviation Administration, Jim Wilding had been the general manager of the FAA's Metropolitan Washington Airports organization. He was on the ground floor laying the foundation

for the milestone event of 1987 and some could even say working hard to eliminate his job.

But, when it was time to turn over control of the airports to a local authority, there was no question about who should lead the new operation. Through Jim's vision and expertise, both Dulles and Reagan National airports have thrived. He has led the airports through the transition away from Federal operation, through rapid growth, and now into the new post-September 11 security framework. His success is the result of intimate knowledge of the workings of modern airports and his total dedication to his craft.

Jim began his career with the Federal Aviation Administration soon after graduating from the Catholic University of America in 1959 with a graduate degree in civil engineering. At the FAA, he participated in the original planning and development of Washington Dulles International Airport.

Following the opening of Dulles in 1962, Jim held progressively responsible positions in all phases of engineering for the two federally owned airports, eventually becoming the organization's chief engineer. He served as chief engineer until becoming the airports' deputy director in 1975, and then its director 4 years later, a position he held until the airports' transfer in 1987, when he assumed his current position.

As president and CEO of the Airports Authority, Jim has overseen passenger activity at National and Dulles Airports nearly double to 31 million passengers in 2002. With this growth, he has managed a massive capital development program at both airports totaling well over \$3 billion. Under Jim's leadership, Reagan National Airport was modernized in 1997 with a new terminal building including major improvements to airport traffic management and Metro system connections. At Dulles, he directed the expansion and construction of new concourses and the building of the airport's first parking garages, and has under way now a \$3.2 billion capital improvement project. In tandem with the airport's growth, the Smithsonian Institution will open its new Air and Space Museum annex later this year located at Dulles Airport.

Dulles Airport has been called the fuel that drives the northern Virginia economy. It is no mystery why so many businesses occupy land along the Dulles Toll Road which, when Dulles was built, was farmland. Dulles provides convenient access for business as well as leisure travelers to destinations all over the United States as well as the entire world.

Jim Wilding could very well also have the title of "Mr. Washington Airports." But his career hasn't just been highlighted with local accolades. His outstanding performance has earned him a national and international reputation as an aviation industry expert.

Jim has been such an integral part of Washington's airports that it will be hard to imagine Dulles and Reagan National without him. On behalf of all members of Congress throughout the years who have used these airports, all the citizens of northern Virginia and the entire metropolitan Washington region, and the entire aviation community, I extend congratulations and best wishes to James A. Wilding on the occasion of his retirement and express deepest gratitude for his exemplary career in public service.